

## South-West *Build Wisconsin* Regional Workshop Small Group Record

Small Group Single Blue (color)

Facilitator Christina Trembly

Recorder-Reporter Brian Russ

### **Top 10 responses to the question: “What can the State do to foster economic growth in your region?”**

Priority response #1 (votes: 7 ) Infrastructure improvements: Highways, etc

Priority response #2 (votes: 7 ) Do a better job of bringing back federal dollars.

Priority response #3 (votes: 6 ) Assist small business (10 or fewer employees) and start-ups with training and financial assistance.

Priority response #4 (votes: 5 ) Put fiscal house in order.

Priority response #5 (votes: 5 ) Develop and sustain a strong, positive statewide image.

Priority response #6 (votes: 5 ) Programs need to be competitive with surrounding states.

Priority response #7 (votes: 5 ) Investigate umbrella health insurance policies for small business.

Priority response #8 (votes: 5 ) Recognize dairy and crop producers as businesses.

Priority response #9 (votes: 5 ) Foster a business friendly tax plan.

Priority response #10 (votes: 5 ) Support technology transfer or engaged universities by rewarding community involvement.

## **“Actions Necessary to Achieve our Ideas” Exercise**

“If we want to accomplish this [priority issue #1], what does “the State” (as defined earlier) have to do now?”

### **Priority Issue #1 Infrastructure improvements: highways, communications.**

Responses to the question: “If we want to accomplish this [priority issue], what does “the State” (as defined earlier) have to do now?”

- \*Demonstrate economic impact when infrastructure improvements have led to successful development.
- \*State should use leverage with communication companies to get resources in rural areas.
- \*Expansion of high speed connectivity.
- \*Allocate funds evenly over a period of time to each of six regions.
- \*Development of airports in rural communities.
- \*Develop state highway 11 to form lanes from I-43 to compete for truck traffic with Illinois.
- \*Prioritize the budget and work with state education and corporate entities to insure success.
- \*Set a benchmark to help communities compete evenly for public facilities improvements.
- \*State should set up key contacts with lending institutions to help with prices; use in-state suppliers.
- \*Get rid of state wage rate—look at getting the best deal on projects.
- \*Have high speed rail access in region.
- \*Keep/maintain present railroads.

## **Priority Issue #2 Capturing federal dollars.**

Responses to the question: “If we want to accomplish this [priority issue], what does “the State” (as defined earlier) have to do now?”

- \*Utilizing federal programs available to state government institutions.
- \*Create a department, lobbyist agency, to investigate federal programs with annual input from regions.
- “Pork can be good” Change our way of thinking.
- Federal delegation to lobby more aggressively and work with legislators to identify our needs.
- Improve state administrative process. Department could disseminate information to regions and counties.
- \*Take advantage of relationships with Secretary Thompson.
- \*Congressional delegation should be given to the charge to return as much dollars as is put in by state.
- \*Website listing government contracts.
- \*University of Wisconsin system look at ore federal programs and use UW Madison and other successful institutions for best practices.

## **Priority Issue #3 Assist small business and start-ups with training and financial assistance.**

Responses to the question: “If we want to accomplish this [priority issue], what does “the State” (as defined earlier) have to do now?”

- \*Reduce red tape: tax incentives, reducing wait time.
- \*Create a fund to take on equity position—stock may be redeemed.
- \*When a new business gets its license or permit, they receive a “start-up kit” listing SBDC sites, available state and federal funding opportunities, training, loans, etc.
- \*Help reimburse “mentors” who work with new small business and start-ups on their management issues.
- \*Expand SBDC outreach by working closely with local economic development corporation.
- \*Small dollar block grants that are less complicated and not based on dollars per jobs.
- \*Tax breaks for banks or angel investment groups that lend to start-up.

\*Eliminate depreciation.

\*Incentive for training on existing technology.

**Priority Issue #4 Develop and sustain a strong, positive statewide image.**

Responses to the question: “If we want to accomplish this [priority issue], what does “the State” (as defined earlier) have to do now?”

\*Identify the messages we want to portray.

\*”Rural is not Remote.”

\*Create a budget.

\*Use Market pros.

\*Aids to new and expanding businesses, both within and outside the state.

\*Stronger web presence.

\*Highlighting the important facts.

\*Accentuate the positives—clean, safe, hardworking work ethic.

\*Tell existing businesses “Thank you” and give adequate recognition.

\*Reasonable and competitive business taxes.